



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, June 25, 1999

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NATIONAL TAXPAYER GROUP CALLS CALFED PLAN A "STEALTH ATTACK ON AMERICAN TAXPAYERS"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The CALFED plan released today in Sacramento, CA is a "stealth attack on American taxpayers who will get stuck with the bill" for billions of dollars of new water projects in California, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS), a leading national taxpayer organization. TCS has previously played a leading role in denying federal funds to costly water projects in California.

In a three-page letter sent today to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Governor Gray Davis, Taxpayers for Common Sense opposed the CALFED "draft preferred program alternative" unveiled today by federal and California state agencies and other interests. The plan for the next seven years calls for the construction of new dams and reservoirs that would cost billions of dollars.

"This is an ill-advised shopping spree without anyone to pay for it," according to Ralph DeGennaro, Executive Director of TCS. "We urge you to instruct CALFED participants to go back to the drawing board until they can identify someone other than federal taxpayers who says they are willing to pay for the draft preferred program alternative."

CALFED's "beneficiary pays" principle is "hollow", continued DeGennaro, since "CALFED hasn't yet said who would benefit from the new dams or who would pay for them." He quoted the Ag Water Caucus, which said in July 1998 that it "strongly objects" to paying any additional costs. DeGennaro also noted that "Southern California water users are already reeling due to cost overruns on the Eastside Reservoir." Finally, DeGennaro wrote that, "In 1998, the California legislature refused to pass a bond act that would have paid for new dams [which] signals that California taxpayers are not interested in paying for these dams."

In June 1996, Taxpayers for Common Sense was the lead national organization in the campaign that defeated federal authorization for the proposed \$944 million Auburn Dam. In April 1999, TCS was the lead national organization in the campaign that defeated federal authorizations for \$300 million of water supply projects sought by U.S. Rep. John Doolittle (R-CA).

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Founded in 1995, Taxpayers for Common Sense is a 501c3 non-partisan, politically independent national budget watchdog organization in Washington, D.C. See www.taxpayer.net for more info.

Media can obtain a faxed copy of the three-page letter sent to Secretary Babbitt and Governor Davis by calling (202) 546-8500 x118.

An independent watchdog for the taxpayers of today and tomorrow
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